

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /011 R

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TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

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FROM NEA/IRN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: IR

SUBJECT: BRIEFING ON F-16 LETTERS OF OFFER

1. USAF BRIEFING ON F-16 LOA'S PRESENTED FOR WASHINGTON AUDIENCE ON MARCH 8 WAS CAREFUL, DETAILED AND FACTUAL. BRIEFER (COL. DEL JACOBS) MADE IT CLEAR THAT WAS HIS INTENTION AND TEAM HAD NO AUTHORITY TO GO BEYOND SET BRIEFING, TO NEGOTIATE ON F-16S OR TO EXPAND TALKS TO GOI'S INTEREST IN OTHER AIRCRAFT OR TO ADDITIONAL F-16S.

2. GIVEN TOUFANIAN'S QUESTIONING IN EARLIER PEACE ZEBRA BRIEFING AND CONTINUING HIGH LEVEL OF GOI CONCERN ABOUT F-16 COSTS, PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT PART OF BRIEFING IS PORTION DESIGNED TO COMPARE GOI FLYAWAY COSTS WITH THOSE FOR USG AND EPG. LINE-BY-LINE COMPARISON WITH EPG AND FACT GOI COSTS COME OUT SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN THOSE FOR EPG SHOULD BE HELPFUL. BRIEFER ALSO MAKES IT CLEAR THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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F-16 IS NEW AND, IN SOME WAYS, UNTESTED AND SO LATER CHARGES FOR MAINTENANCE AND UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS COULD INCREASE TOTAL COSTS. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, THIS DETAILED COMPARISON OF KNOWN COSTS AND NOTING PRECISE UNPREDICTABILITY OF OTHERS SEEMS BEST WE CAN DO.

3. A RELATED CONCERN SINCE EARLIER PEACE ZEBRA BRIEFING

HAS BEEN GOI'S REFERENCES TO IMPORTANCE OF REDUCING SIGNIFICANTLY DOLS 3.8 BILLION TOTAL ESTIMATE OUTLINED THEN. SOME REDUCTION DOES SEEM LIKELY, BUT ORGANIZATION OF THIS CASE INTO SIX LOA'S MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY NOW HOW MUCH THAT REDUCTION WILL BE. ESTIMATED COST FOR FIRST FOUR LOA'S IS DOLS 2,857.6 BILLION IN THEN-YEAR MONEY, BUT THAT FIGURE COULD BE REDUCED TO AS LOW AS DOLS 2.5 BILLION. NO FIGURES FOR LOA'S 5 AND 6 (DEPOT SUPPORT PACKAGE AND IN-COUNTRY CONTRACTOR SUPPORT) ARE GIVEN IN BRIEFING; THEY WILL DEPEND ON WHAT GOI WANTS AND SO COULD BE ANYWHERE FROM DOLS 300 MILLION TO DOLS 1 BILLION. IN FYI, BRIEFER COMMENTED MOST LIKELY GUESS IS THAT EARLIER DOLS 3.8 BILLION FIGURE WILL BE REDUCED

BY AT LEAST DOLS 300 MILLION. LOA'S 5 AND 6 DO NOT HAVE TO BE SIGNED UNTIL MID-1979; IN MEANTIME LACK OF A GRAND TOTAL COULD BE FRUSTRATING TO ALL CONCERNED.

4. ONLY OTHER POINT WORTH NOTING BEFORE TEHRAN BRIEFING IS TEAM'S CONCERN OVER NEWS THAT GENERAL DYNAMICS PRESIDENT LEWIS HAS BEEN IN IRAN. THEY HOPE LEWIS HAS NOT BEEN PRESENTING CONTRADICTORY FIGURES TO GOI SINCE THAT COULD LEAD TO PROBLEMS SIMILAR TO THOSE ENCOUNTERED DURING BRIEFING TEAM'S PREVIOUS PRESENTATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MILITARY SALES, DEBRIEFINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 22 May 2009
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE052549
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MLGREENE:MRC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770081-0906
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770376/aaaacpdv.tel
Line Count: 88
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d8c5d1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3158153
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRIEFING ON.16 LETTERS OF OFFER
TAGS: MARR, IR
To: TEHRAN
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d8c5d1ba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009